

The Impact Agenda

Three examples of how to try...

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Cabinet Office
Office for Civil Society

BARROW CADBURY

E·S·R·C
ECONOMIC
& SOCIAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL

Local Authority Anti-Poverty Policy Mid-1990s

Linked projects over 3-4 years

Range of funders

- ESRC
- Local Government Management Board/
Improvement and Development Agency
- Department of Environment, Transport and Regions
- Consortium of local authorities

Local Authority Anti-Poverty Policy Mid-1990s

Different stakeholder interests

- Funder expectations – local and central government
- Local authority policy makers (LGMB)
- Local authority officers – and councillors
- Anti-poverty campaigners
- Academic analysts

Local Authority Anti-Poverty Policy Mid-1990s

Action research – building in ‘pathways to impact’

- Formative feedback
 - Engagement with funders, respondents and research users
 - Events and presentations
 - Targeted outputs
- Willingness to take-on fringe activities

Local Authority Anti-Poverty Policy Mid-1990s

Impact

- Detailed guidance for local authorities on designing and delivering anti-poverty (social inclusion) policies – *What Counts: What Works*
- Indirect influence on central government area-based initiatives
- Working with local authority officers on implementation – ongoing relationships...

Work to Welfare – 1997-99

ESRC funded project - *Hidden unemployment*

Men leaving the labour market in former industrial areas

- Incapacity Benefit
- Early retirement
- Economic inactivity

Quantitative and qualitative methodologies

Work to Welfare – 1997-99

Demand-side problems

- lack of investment and employment

Supply-side problems

- Detachment from labour market
- Individual and family circumstances
- At the back off the queue for jobs...

Work to Welfare – 1997-99

Policy implications

- Need for individual employment support
- Need for flexible labour market opportunities
- Need for targeted demand-side investment

But...

- Attack on scroungers not seeking jobs
- Abuse of Incapacity Benefit

Work to Welfare – 1997-99

Policy impact

- Individual employment support, but with limited resources and within existing benefits framework
- Reductions in scope of benefit entitlement
- Lack of flexibility in labour market opportunities
- Failure of targeted demand-side investment

Labour market detachment seen as individual problem

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Collaborative (Venture) initiative

- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
- Cabinet Office - Office of the Third Sector (OTS)/
Office for Civil Society (OCS)
- Barrow Cadbury Trust

Independent research for academia, policy and practice

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Impact and engagement strategy

- Knowledge Exchange Team
- Advisory Board
- Reference Groups
- Newsletters and social media
- Stakeholder events
- Targeted outputs – Working and Briefing Papers

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Policy impact challenges

- Devolution
- Lack of co-ordination within central government
- Changing priorities within OTS

New government

- New policy agenda
 - Changed attitude to evidence
 - Reductions in Cabinet Office capacity
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Practice impact challenges

- Diversity and difference within third sector
- Policy elite agendas
- Short term and pragmatic approach to research
- Desire to influence research agenda

Managing expectations...

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Policy impact

- Civic Core
- Distribution and risk of public funding
- Tesco-isation – trends in charity finance

Practice impact

- Co-ops UK database
- Micro-mapping
- Social Return on Investment